

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----211224Z 042660 /15

R 211107Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2195

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 3513

EXDIS

FOR UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: IR, US
SUBJ: SECRETARY'S MAY 13 MEETING WITH THE SHAH

1. THE SHAH IS VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING SECRETARY VANCE, HIS FIRST CONTACT WITH SENIOR OFFICIAL OF NEW ADMINISTRATION. HE WAS NOTICEABLY UNEASY ABOUT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARD IRAN IN THE INTERVAL FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENT'S ELECTION. RECEIPT OF THE PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTFUL LETTER (STATE 028868) EASED HIS CONCERN SOMEWHAT, BUT HE NOW HOPES TO HEAR -- IN SPECIFIC DETAIL -- HOW THE GOOD INTENTIONS EXPRESSED IN THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER ARE TO BE CARRIED OUT. FROM WHAT WE HEAR, HE IS PLEASED WITH AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S NOMINATION AND SEES HIM AS A MAN WHOSE EXPERIENCE HAS GIVEN HIM A REALISTIC APPRECIATION OF COMMUNIST AMBITIONS, TACTICS AND METHODS. IN THE SHAH'S MIND THIS IS A VERY STRONG PLUS.

2. UPPERMOST IN THE SHAH'S MIND IS THE QUESTION OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CONTINUATION OF THE COOPERATIVE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP HE HAS HAD WITH THE UNITED STATES FOR THE LAST THREE DECADES. HIS ANXIETY HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE QUESTION OF ARMS TRANSFERS AND SIGNS OF CONGRESSIONAL
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CONCERN ABOUT THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS HE HAS OR WISHES TO OBTAIN FROM THE UNITED STATES. HE IS CERTAIN TO RAISE THIS QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE THREAT, REAL OR POTENTIAL, THAT HE CONSIDERS IRAN FACES FROM VIRTUALLY EVERY QUARTER. EVEN THOUGH RELATIONS WITH IRAQ ARE NOW ON A BETTER FOOTING THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN YEARS, HE CONTINUES TO BE ALARMED BY THE SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF

SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT IRAQ GETS FROM THE SOVIET UNION. FURTHER, HE SEES IRAN AS THE ONLY CREDIBLE GUARANTOR OF THE FREEDOM OF PASSAGETHROUGH THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ, THE CHOKE POINT OF THE PERSIAN GULF OIL FLOWING TO THE WEST. RECENT EVENTS IN PAKISTAN, AND TO SOME EXTENT IN INDIA, HAVE CAUSED HIM TO LOOK INCREASINGLY AT HIS DEFENSES ON HIS EASTERN FLANK AND APPROACHES TO IRAN FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN. HE IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA AND SEES THE SOVIET UNION MAKING GREAT HEADWAY DIRECTLY OR THROUGH CUBA, ITS SURROGATE. HE WILL DOUBTLESS ASK THE SECRETARY FOR HIS VIEWS ON THESE QUESTIONS.

3. ANOTHER QUESTION TROUBLING HIM IS WHETHER THE NEW

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 3513

EXDIS

ADMINISTRATION'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS MAY AFFECT OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD IRAN, AND SPECIFICALLY WHETHER SOME LINKAGE MAY BE MADE WITH ARMS TRANSFERS AS HAS BEEN DONE IN LATIN AMERICA. RECENTLY A NUMBER OF STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE IRAN'S IMAGE IN THIS RESPECT AND TO PLACE ITS PERFORMANCE IN BETTER PERSPECTIVE. A PUBLIC TRIAL OF DISSIDENTS, INVITATIONS TO CRITICS SUCH AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS ARE AMONG THESE STEPS. OTHERS MAY FOLLOW. IN OUR JUDGMENT IT MAY BEST BE ASSURED BY AVOIDING A DIRECT CONFRONTATION AND CONTINUING TO ENCOURAGE THE CHANGES WE SEE ALREADY UNDERWAY. IF WE ADDRESS THIS QUESTION WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK THE TOTAL RECORD OF IRAN'S IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN OTHER AREAS SUCH AS LAND REFORM, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, THE SHAH WAS VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH AHERTON'S SEPTEMBER 8 STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT BEFORE THE HIRC SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANI-

ZATIONS.

4. ON THE SUBJECT OF OIL PRICES, THE NEED TO CONSERVE ENERGY, AND THE NEED TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY, THE SHAH WILL SEE THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT STATEMENTS AS VERY MUCH IN ACCORD WITH HIS OWN VIEWS. HE WILL ALSO SEE THEM AS BUTTRESSING HIS OPINION THAT OIL IF ANYTHING IS UNDERPRICED. HE WILL NOT CONCEDE THAT IRAN HAS BEHAVED IRRESPONSIBLY IN
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THIS REGARD AND INDEED WAS QUITE STUNG WHEN SO CHARGED BY PRESIDENT FORD.

5. THE SHAH MAY ALSO WISH TO GET INTO THE QUESTION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. HE HAS AMBITIOUS PLANS TO INSTALL UP TO 23,000 MEGAWATTS OF NUCLEAR POWER CAPACITY OVER THE COMING DECADE OR MORE. HE IS UNDERSTANDABLY CONCERNED THEREFORE ABOUT FUEL FOR HIS REACTOR PLANTS. HE HAS STATED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO ACQUIRE PERHAPS HALF OF HIS PROJECTED NUCLEAR PLANT CAPACITY FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND HOPES THAT WE CAN CONCLUDE SOON A NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT WHICH WILL PERMIT HIM TO PURSUE THIS. ANYTHING THE SECRETARY MAY BE ABLE TO SAY ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD BE HELPFUL.

6. THE SHAH VALUES VERY HIGHLY IRAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE US AND THE PERSONAL RAPPORT HE HAS ESTABLISHED WITH PAST US PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE. HE SEES HIMSELF AS A WORLD STATESMAN OF THE FRONT RANK AND LIKES TO DISCUSS GLOBAL ISSUES. HE IS REMARKABLY WELL-INFORMED. HE WILL CERTAINLY WANT TO CONTINUE THE PATTERNS OF THE PAST AND HE WILL WELCOME THE SECRETARY MOST CORDIALLY.
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